

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF

OUR MOST HOLY LORD PIUS IX.

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE POPE.

*To all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries
in the Grace and Communion of the Apostolic See.*

EXAMINED BY THE RT. REV. BISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA, AND PUBLISHED WITH
HIS APPROBATION.

PHILADELPHIA:

McLAUGHLIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS, NOS. 112 AND 114 SOUTH THIRD STREET.

1874.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

PIUS PP. IX.

Venerable Brethren;

Health and the Apostolic Benediction:



ALTHOUGH many grievous and bitter sufferings, from the beginning of Our long Pontificate, have fallen to Our lot through various causes which We have unfolded in Our Encyclical letters from time to time, yet in these last years the number of Our sorrows has so increased that, were We not upheld by the mercy of God, We should be almost overwhelmed by them.

Of late, indeed, matters have reached such a pass, that death itself seems better than life amid such storms, and with eyes lifted up to heaven We are fain to cry, "It is better for us to die than to see the evils of the "saints."* Ever since Our city of Rome by the will of God has been taken away by force of arms, and has passed under the sway of men, who despise law, who are enemies of religion, who confound all things both human and divine, hardly a day has passed without inflicting some new wound on Our heart already suffering from repeated injuries and wrongs. There ring still in Our ears the cries of religious men and women, who have been driven from their homes in poverty

* Machab. iii. 59.

and scattered hither and thither by hostile hands, as is done where revolution triumphs: just as, according to Athanasius, the great Anthony used to say, "The devil "hates all Christians, but he cannot endure good monks "and virgins dedicated to Christ."

We have now seen what we thought could never come to pass, viz. the suppression and abolition of the Roman University, which had been established (according to the words of an ancient author writing on the Anglo-Saxon school in Rome), that young church-students from distant parts might be educated in Catholic faith and doctrine, lest in their own lands they should be wrongly taught or in a way contrary to Catholic unity, and that they might go back strong and steadfast in the faith. Thus while by foul means We are by degrees deprived of all ways of ruling and governing the Universal Church, it is clearly manifest how very far from the truth is that which has been asserted, viz. that the liberty of the Roman Pontiff in the exercise of his spiritual ministry and in his relations with the Catholic world has been no wise diminished by the loss of Our city: nay it becomes clearer every day, how truly We have so often insisted, that the sacrilegious usurpation of Our territory has had for its especial object the subversion of the Pontifical authority and the destruction, if possible, of the Catholic Religion itself.

It is not however the object of Our letter to write to you on the woes of Our city and of the whole of Italy, We would rather pass in silence over Our own sorrows, if by the mercy of God We could assuage the bitter griefs which so many of Our Venerable Brethren, their clergy and people, are undergoing in other lands.

You are well aware, Venerable Brethren, that certain of the Cantons of the Swiss Federation—not at the suggestion of non-Catholics, some of whom have condemned the act, but at the bidding of those busy members of secret societies who have now everywhere possessed themselves of power—have overturned the order and undermined the foundations of the Church of Christ, contrary to every rule of justice and in spite of their publicly pledged word; for according to solemn covenants passed by the laws and authority of the Federation the religious liberty of the Catholics ought to be maintained inviolate.

In Our Allocution of the 23d of December, 1872, We lamented the wrongs inflicted on religion by the Governments of those Cantons, “both in making decrees “concerning the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, in showing favor to apostates, and in forbidding the exercise of episcopal power.” Our just complaints made by Our Envoy before the Federal Council were altogether overlooked, nor was greater regard shown to the repeated remonstrances of the Bishops of Switzerland, and of the Catholics of every class, and fresh wrongs put the last stroke to the injuries already inflicted.

After the forcible banishment of Our Venerable Brother Gaspar, Bishop of Hebron and Vicar-Apostolic of Geneva, so glorious for the sufferer and so disgraceful to those who put it into execution, the Government of Geneva, on the 23d of March and the 27th of August of this year, enacted two laws of the same tenor as the decree of October, 1872, which was condemned by Us in the Allocution before mentioned. That Government has claimed the right of reforming

the constitution of the Catholic Church in the Canton according to the radical pattern, and of subjecting the Bishop to the Civil Power in the exercise of his proper jurisdiction, and the administration and delegation of his authority to others; forbidding him to dwell in the Canton, limiting the number and boundaries of the parishes, laying down the form and conditions of the election of parish priests and their assistants, and the manner of their resignation or suspension; assigning to laymen the right of nomination and the temporal administration and inspection of ecclesiastical affairs generally. Moreover, parish priests and their assistants, without permission—withdrawn at pleasure—of the Government, were forbidden to exercise their functions, to accept any dignities higher than that conferred upon them by the election of the people, and were also forced to take an oath in terms involving actual apostasy. It is clear that laws of this kind are not only null and void by reason of want of power in the law-makers as being laymen and non-Catholics, but also as regards their provisions that they are so contrary to the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, and to the ecclesiastical discipline enjoined by Pontifical Constitutions and the Œcumenical Council of Trent, that they ought to be altogether rejected by Us.

We, therefore, as required by Our office, do, by Our Apostolic authority, solemnly reject and condemn them, declaring the required oath to be unlawful and sacrilegious, and that all those, who in the Canton of Geneva or elsewhere, having been elected according to the tenor of the same laws, or others like them, by the votes of the people, and confirmation of the civil power,

shall venture to take upon them ecclesiastical functions, do *ipso facto* incur the greater excommunication, especially reserved to this Holy See and other canonical penalties; and that they are to be avoided by the faithful according to the Divine command "as strangers and "robbers, who come not but to steal and to kill and to destroy."*

These are sad and sorrowful events, but deeds still more sorrowful have taken place in five of the seven cantons which form the Diocese of Bâle, viz.: Soleure, Berne, Bâle-Campagne, Aargau, and Zurich. In those parts also laws have been enacted concerning parishes, the election and discharge of parish priests and their assistants, subversive of the government and Divine constitution of the Church, and subjecting the Church to the secular and schismatical power. These laws, and especially the law of the 23d of December, 1872, passed by the Government of Soleure, We denounce and condemn, and order to be considered as so denounced and condemned. After Our Venerable Brother Eugenius, Bishop of Bâle, in his just indignation and Apostolic fortitude, had rejected certain articles proposed in the meeting or so-called diocesan conference, to which there came delegates from the five aforesaid cantons,—having a just reason for rejecting them as injurious to Episcopal authority, subversive of hierarchical government, and openly favorable to heresy: for this cause he was banished from his Bishopric, expelled from his house, and violently driven into exile. No kind of wrong and injury was left undone to lead into schism the clergy and

* St. John, x., 5, 10.

people of the five aforesaid cantons; the clergy were forbidden to hold any intercourse with their banished pastor; orders were given to the Cathedral Chapter of Bâle to proceed to the election of a Vicar-Capitular or Administrator, as if the See were actually vacant. The Chapter, however, vigorously protested, and spurned such unworthy action. In the meantime, by a decree of the civil magistrates of Berne, sixty-nine parish-priests of the Canton of Jura were forbidden to exercise their functions, and deprived of their office, for the only reason that they had openly testified, that they acknowledged only Our Venerable Brother Eugenius as their lawful Bishop and Pastor, and would not treacherously sever themselves from Catholic unity. The consequence is that the whole of that district—which had constantly preserved the Catholic faith, and which had been united to the Canton of Berne on the condition of keeping the exercise of religion free and inviolate—has been deprived of Mass, and the rites of baptism, marriage, and burial in spite of the complaints and remonstrances of the faithful, by the highest injustice reduced to the necessity either of receiving schismatical and heretical pastors thrust upon them by civil authority, or of being deprived of all assistance and ministry of their priests.

We thank God for upholding and strengthening with the same grace that sustained the martyrs, that chosen part of the Catholic flock, which manfully follows their Bishop," setting up a wall for the house of Israel "to stand in battle in the day of the Lord,"* and without fear treading in the footsteps of the Head of Mar-

* Ezech. xiii., 5.

tyrs, Jesus Christ, meeting ferocious wolves with the meekness of lambs, and cheerfully and patiently fighting for the Faith.

This noble constancy of the faithful in Switzerland is imitated in a manner worthy of all praise by the clergy and faithful people of Germany, following the bright examples of their Bishops. They have been made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, who from every side look up to them clad with the breastplate of Catholic truth, and in the helmet of salvation, valiantly fighting the battle of God. Their courage and invincible fortitude is the more admired and praised, as day by day the persecution raised against them in Germany, and especially in Prussia, rages more and more bitterly.

Beside many grievous wrongs inflicted last year upon the Catholic Church, the Prussian Government has subjected to the civil power, by cruel and unjust legislation, altogether alien from its former conduct, the entire instruction and education of the clergy, in such manner that it belongs to the said power to inquire into and to decide in what manner Church students are to be taught and trained to the sacerdotal and pastoral life; and proceeding further, it gives to the same power the right of examining and judging in respect to collating to all ecclesiastical offices and benefices, and even of depriving sacred pastors of office and of benefice. Moreover, in order to subvert more speedily and completely the ecclesiastical government of the Church, and the order of Hierarchical obedience instituted by Christ Our Lord Himself, many obstacles are interposed by the same laws to hinder the Bishops in providing with

timely measures by canonical censures and pains for the salvation of souls, for the soundness of doctrine in Catholic schools, or for the obedience due to them from their clergy. For, according to the tenor of those laws the Bishops are not permitted to exercise these functions, save only at the pleasure of the civil authority and according to the rules laid down by the same. Finally, that nothing should be wanting to the entire suppression of the Catholic Church a royal tribunal for ecclesiastical affairs has been instituted, before which Bishops and sacred pastors may be cited, both by private men who are their subjects, and by public magistrates, there to receive judgment as criminals, and to be coerced in the exercise of their spiritual office.

Thus the Holy Church of Christ, to which the necessary and full liberty of religion had been guaranteed by the solemn and reiterated promises of princes, and by public pacts and conventions, is now in mourning in those regions, stripped of its every right, and exposed to hostile powers which threaten it with final destruction; for this new legislation reaches to the point of rendering the life of the Church impossible.

No wonder, therefore, that in that Empire the former religious peace should be broken up by laws of this kind, and by the other counsels and acts of the Prussian Government full of hostility to the Church. Wherefore, if any one would throw the blame of these perturbations on the Catholics of the German Empire, it would be altogether without warrant. For if it be imputed to them as an offence that they do not acquiesce in those laws in which with a safe conscience they cannot acquiesce; for a like reason and in like

manner the apostles and martyrs of Jesus Christ are to be accused, who choose rather to undergo the most cruel punishment and death itself than betray their proper office, and violate the laws of their most holy religion in obedience to impious commands of persecuting Princes. Of a truth, Venerable Brothers, if no other laws than the laws of a civil empire existed, and laws indeed of a higher order which it is a duty to obey and sin to violate; if, moreover, these same civil laws could constitute a supreme rule of conscience, as some impiously and absurdly contend, the primitive martyrs, and they who afterwards followed them in shedding their blood for the Faith of Christ and the liberty of the Church, would be rather worthy of blame than of honor and praise. Nay, it would not even have been possible, in the teeth of laws and against the will of Princes, to preach and propagate the Christian religion, and to found the Church. The Faith however teaches, and human reason demonstrates, that there exists a twofold order of things, and at the same time two powers are to be distinguished on the earth—the one natural, which provides for the tranquillity of human society and secular affairs; the other, the origin of which is above nature, supreme over the City of God, that is the Church of Christ, divinely instituted for the peace and the eternal salvation of souls. And the offices of twofold power are in wisdom ordained that the things of God should be rendered to God, and that, in obedience to God, the things of Cæsar should be rendered to Cæsar, who is “therefore great because he is less
“than heaven; for he himself belongs to Him to whom

“belong the heavens and every creature.”* From this divine command the Church assuredly has never turned aside, for it has always and everywhere labored to impress on the minds of the faithful the obedience which they ought inviolably to maintain towards sovereign Princes and their laws in secular things, and it has taught with the apostle, that “Princes are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil, commanding the faithful to be subject not only for wrath’s sake, because the Prince bears the sword, as an avenger in wrath for him who does evil, but also for conscience sake, because in his office he is the minister of God.”† This fear of Princes the Church itself restrains to evil deeds, and excludes it expressly from the observance of the divine law, being mindful of that which the blessed Peter taught to the faithful: “Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men’s goods, but if as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.”‡

Since these things are so, you will easily understand, Venerable Brothers, with what sorrow of mind We must have been affected when We read in a letter lately sent to Us by the Emperor of Germany in person an accusation not less cruel than unlooked for against a part, as he himself says, of his Catholic subjects, and especially against the Catholic clergy and Bishops of Germany. Of which accusation this is the cause, that they, fearless of bonds and tribulations and not “counting their life more precious than themselves,”§ have

* Tertullian. Apolog. cap. 30.

† 1 St. Peter. iv. 15. 16.

‡ Rom. xiii. 3.

§ Acts. xx. 24.

refused to obey the aforesaid laws with the same constancy, with which, before they were passed, they had protested by denouncing their injustice, which was unfolded in grave, luminous, and solid expostulations, amidst the applause of the whole Catholic world, and of not a few even of non-Catholics, before the Sovereign, his Ministers, and the supreme legislature of the kingdom. For that cause they are now accused as of the crime of treason, as of consenting and conspiring with those who are endeavoring to overthrow all orders in human society, without regard to innumerable and notable proofs which evidently bear witness to their unshaken faith and allegiance to their Sovereign and their fervent patriotism towards their country. Yea, and We ourselves are asked to exhort those Catholics and sacred pastors to observe the aforesaid laws, which is to ask that We also ourselves should lend Our help in oppressing and scattering the flock of Christ. But, trusting in God, We are confident that the most Serene Emperor, when he has better ascertained and weighed these things, will reject a suspicion so empty and incredible against his faithful servants, and will no longer endure that their honor should be assailed by so foul a calumny, and that an unmerited persecution should be continued against them.

We should indeed have gladly passed over in this place the letter of the Emperor, if it had not been made public by the official journal in Berlin altogether without our knowledge, and in a manner certainly unusual, together with another letter written by Our hand, in which We appealed for the Catholic Church in Prussia to the justice of the most Serene Emperor.

The things which We have thus far recounted are before the eyes of all: wherefore, while Religious and Virgins dedicated to God are deprived of the common liberty of citizens, and are exiled with cruel harshness; while public schools, in which Catholic youth are educated, are day by day further withdrawn from the wholesome teaching and vigilance of the Church; while societies founded for the nurturing of piety, and even the seminaries of the clergy are dissolved; while the liberty of preaching the Gospel is hindered, while it is prohibited in certain parts of the kingdom to teach the elements of religious education in the mother-tongue, while the priests are forcibly taken away from the parishes over which they were set by the Bishops, and the Bishops themselves are deprived of their revenues, coerced by fines, and menaced by threats of imprisonments, while Catholics are disturbed by vexations of every kind, is it possible that we should receive into our mind that which is laid before us. viz.: that neither the religion of Jesus Christ nor the truth is called in question.

Nor is this the end of the wrongs which are inflicted upon the Catholic Church. For to this must be also added the patronage which has been openly taken up by the Prussian and the other Governments of the Germanic Empire in behalf of those new heretics, who call themselves *Old Catholics* by the abuse of the name, which would be truly ridiculous, if it were not that so many monstrous errors of that sect against the chief principles of the Catholic faith, so many sacrileges in Divine worship and in the administration of sacraments, so many gravest scandals, so great a havoc of souls

redeemed in the Blood of Christ, did not rather draw abundant tears from Our eyes.

The attempts, indeed, and the aims of these unhappy sons of perdition appear plainly, both from other writings of theirs, and most of all from that impious and most impudent of documents, which has lately been published by him whom they have set up for themselves as their so-called Bishop. For they deny and pervert the true authority of jurisdiction which is in the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops, the successors of the Blessed Peter and the Apostles, and transfer it to the populace, or, as they say, to the community; they stubbornly reject and assail the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff and of the whole Church; and, contrary to the Holy Spirit, who has been promised by Christ to abide in His Church for ever, they audaciously affirm that the Roman Pontiff, and the whole of the Bishops, priests, and people, who are united with him in one faith and communion, have fallen into heresy by sanctioning and professing the definitions of the Œcumenical Vatican Council. Therefore they deny even the indefectibility of the Church, blasphemously saying that it has perished throughout the world, and that its visible Head and its Bishops have fallen away, and that for this reason it has been necessary for them to restore the lawful Episcopate in their pseudo-bishop, a man who, entering not by the gate, but coming up another way, has drawn upon his head the condemnation of Christ.

Nevertheless, those unhappy men who would undermine the foundations of the Catholic religion and destroy its character and endowments, who have invented such shameful and manifold errors, or rather have col-

lected them together from the old store of heretics, are not ashamed to call themselves Catholics, and *Old Catholics*; while by their doctrine, their novelty, and their fewness, they give up all mark of antiquity and of Catholicity. Truly with a stronger right against them than in former days, by the mouth of St. Augustine against the Donatists, the Church which is spread abroad among all nations, which Christ the Son of the living God has built upon the rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and with which He, to whom all power has been given in heaven and upon earth, has promised that he will remain all days to the end of the world, cries out to the Eternal Spouse: "Why do those who have gone from me murmur against me? Why do those who are lost declare that it is I who have perished? Announce to me the fewness of my days: how long shall I be in this world? Tell it to me for the sake of those who say that she was and now she is not; for the sake of those who say that the Scriptures have been fulfilled, the nations have believed, but the Church has apostatized and perished from all the nations." And it was answered; nor was the voice an empty one. In what words was it announced? *Behold I am with you until the consummation of the world.* That is, moved by your words and your false opinions, the Church asks of God to make known to her the fewness of her days, and she finds that the Lord has said: *Behold I am with you until the consummation of the world.* Here you will reason thus: "Of us it is said that we are, and shall be until the end of the world. Let Christ be asked: *And this Gospel*, He says, *shall be preached in the whole world, in testimony*

*“to all nations, and then shall the end come. Therefore, “until the end of the world is the Church among all “nations.” May heretics perish; may they perish as they are, and be found to become what they are not.**

But these men, going on more boldly in the way of iniquity and perdition, as by a just judgment of God it happens to heretical sects, have wished also to form to themselves a hierarchy, as we have said, and have chosen and set up for themselves as their pseudo-bishop a certain notorious apostate from the Catholic Faith, Joseph Hubert Reinkens; and that nothing might be wanting to their impudence, for his consecration they have had recourse to those Jansenists of Utrecht whom they themselves, before their falling away from the Church, regarded with other Catholics as heretics and schismatics. Nevertheless, this Joseph Hubert dares to call himself a Bishop, and, incredible as it may seem, the Most Serene Emperor of Germany has by a public decree named and acknowledged him as a Catholic Bishop, and exhibited him to all his subjects as one who is to be regarded as a lawful Bishop, and as such to be obeyed. But the very rudiments of Catholic teaching declare, that no one can be held to be a lawful Bishop who is not joined in communion of faith and charity to the Rock on which the one Church of Christ is built; who does not adhere to the Supreme Pastor to whom all the sheep of Christ are committed to be fed; who is not united to the confirmer of the brotherhood which is in the world. And, indeed, “to Peter did the Lord “speak: to one, that he might by one establish unity.”†

* August. in Psalm. 101, enarrat. 2, num. 8, 9.

† Pacian, Ep. iii. n. 11.

To Peter "the Divine authority has given a great and "wonderful share of His power, and if that authority "has wished anything to be in common between Him "and other princes, it is only through Him that it has "been given."* Hence it is that from this Apostolic See, where the blessed Peter "lives and presides, and "dispenses the truth to all who seek it,"† "the rights of "holy fellowship extend to all;"‡ and it is certain that this same See is "to the churches throughout the world "as the head to the members, and that if any one cuts "himself off from it, he becomes an outcast from the "Christian religion, since he is not in the same bond of "union."§

Hence the holy martyr Cyprian, speaking of the schismatical pseudo-bishop Novatian, denied to him the very name of Christian as being separated and cut off from the Church of Christ: "Whoever he is and whatever he is, *he* is not a Christian who is not in the "Church of Christ. Though he boast himself and talk "of his wisdom and eloquence in proud language, he "who has not retained either brotherly love or ecclesiastical unity has lost even what he before possessed. "Since the one Church has been divided by Christ into "many members throughout the whole world, and also "one Episcopate has been overspread therein by the "manifold unity of many Bishops, that man in spite of "the tradition of God and in spite of the closely compacted unity of the Church, is endeavoring to make "the Church human. He, therefore, who maintains

* St. Leo, M. serm. 3. in sua assumpt. Optatus, lib. ii. n. 2.

† St. Peter Chrys. ep. ad Eutyech. ‡ St. Jerome ep. 14 & 16 ad Damas.

§ Bonifac. I ep. 14 ad Episcopos Thessal.

“neither the unity of the Spirit nor the brotherhood of peace, and severs himself from the bonds of the Church and from the fellowship of the priesthood, can possess neither the power of a Bishop nor the honor, unity and peace of the Episcopate.”*

We, therefore, who have been placed, undeserving as We are, in the Suprême See of Peter, for the guardianship of the Catholic Faith, and for the maintenance of the Unity of the Universal Church, according to the custom and example of Our predecessors and their holy decrees by the power given to us from on high; not only declare the election of the said Joseph Herbert Reinkens to be contrary to the holy canons, unlawful and altogether null and void, and denounce and condemn his consecration as sacrilegious, but by the authority of Almighty God We declare the said Joseph Herbert,—together with those who have taken part in his election and sacrilegious consecration, and whoever adhere to and follow the same, giving aid, favor, or consent—excommunicated, under anathema, separated from the communion of the Church, and to be reckoned among those whose fellowship has been forbidden to the faithful by the Apostle, so that they are not so much as to say to them God speed you.†

From these facts, to which we have referred in brief rather than at large, you are well assured, Venerable Brethren, how grave and full of danger is the condition of Catholics in those countries of Europe which we have mentioned.

Neither are matters more favorable, or the times

* Cyprian, contra Novatian, Ep. 52, ad Antonian. † 2 St. John, 10.

more peaceful in South America, where some countries are so hostile to Catholics that their governments seem rather to deny in deeds than to profess the Catholic Faith. There for some years bitter war has been stirred up against the Church and its institutions, and against the rights of this Apostolic See. Matter would not be wanting, were We to enlarge upon this subject; but since, on account of its grave nature, it cannot be lightly touched upon, We shall take another occasion to treat at length of it.

Some of you may perhaps be surprised, Venerable Brethren, that the war which is carried on at this time against the Catholic Church extends so far and wide. But whoever is acquainted with the character, the aims, and purposes of the secret societies—be they Freemasons or by whatever name they are known—and compares them with the character and extent of the strife, which throughout nearly the whole world is waged against the Church, cannot hesitate to assign the cause of our present calamities to the craft and conspiracy of the same secret societies. From them is made up the Synagogue of Satan, which is marshalling its forces and preparing to engage hand to hand against the Church of Christ. From their first beginnings they have been denounced to the kings and to the nations by Our predecessors who have watched over Israel; again and again have they condemned them nor have We ourselves failed in this Our duty. Would that the Supreme Pastors of the Church had been more firmly believed by those who could have warded off so terrible a plague! But the secret societies winding along by crooked ways, never ceasing their task, beguiling many with their

cunning craft, are now bursting forth from their hiding-places, and boasting themselves to be all-powerful. These sinful associations, having greatly increased the number of their adherents, fancy that they have now attained their ends and all but reached the goal set before them. Succeeding in this object, after which they have so long hankered—the possession of the chief power in many places—they are now boldly using the strength and power they have acquired that the Church of God may be reduced to the most grinding slavery, that it may be upturned from its foundations and defaced in the divine marks with which it shines conspicuous; in a word, that shaken, shattered, and overthrown by many blows, it may if possible be utterly blotted out from the world.

Since these things are so, do you, Venerable Brothers, do your best to strengthen the faithful committed to your care against the snares and canker of these secret societies, and to save from destruction those who have unfortunately joined them. Do you especially disprove and show up the errors of those, who from bad faith or through deceit do not shrink from asserting that these secret assemblies have for their only object social progress and advantage, and the practice of mutual benevolence. Explain to them and fix deeply in their minds the Pontifical decrees on this matter, and show that they refer not only to the Masonic societies in Europe, but to those that exist in America and throughout the countries of the world.

To conclude, Venerable Brethren, since We have fallen on times not only of suffering, but of meriting much, let Us take especial care, as good soldiers of

Christ, not to despair, as in the midst of the storm We have a sure hope of future calm, and a glorious peace for the Church, and, trusting in the assistance of God, let Us cheer ourselves, Our toiling clergy, and Our people with the noble words of Chrysostom: "Many waves and storms threaten us, but we are not afraid of being overwhelmed, for we stand upon the rock. Though the sea rage, it cannot melt the rock; though the waves arise, yet they cannot sink the bark of Jesus. There is nothing mightier than the Church. The Church is stronger than heaven itself. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.* What words are these? *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* If you do not believe in words, believe in deeds. How many tyrants have tried to oppress the Church? How many gridirons, how many furnaces, how many wild beasts, how many swords have been prepared against her? How much have they accomplished? Nothing? Where are her foes? They are forgotten. Where is the Church? She shines more brightly than the sun. Her foes have perished; her children are immortal. If when there were few Christians they were not overcome; how, when the whole world is full of holy religion, will you be able to overcome them? *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*"

Disturbed, therefore, by no danger and no fear, let us continue steadfast in prayer, and with one mind let us endeavor to appease the anger of Heaven, provoked by the sins of men, so that at last in His mercy the Almighty may arise and command the winds that they be still.

Meanwhile, in testimony of Our especial affection, We lovingly impart to you all, Venerable Brothers, to the clergy, and all the people committed to your care, Our Apostolic blessing.

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, on the twenty-first day of November, in the year of Our Lord, 1873, in the twenty-eighth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. IX.

